

February 8, 1980

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A Statement to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents

Harlan Cleveland

Madam Chairman, Members of the Board of Regents:

I greatly appreciate your invitation to become Director of the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. I am thoroughly sold on the potential of the Institute, and impressed with the quality of support that is available for such an enterprise in this incomparable community called Minnesota.

To undertake this task in honor of Hubert Humphrey, and in the presence of Muriel Humphrey, is something almost inexpressibly special. I always thought of Hubert as a bustling bundle of practical compassion, blessed also with an infinite capacity for warmth and friendship. My wife Lois and I were among the many thousands of people who regarded him as a close personal friend. We never quite figured out how a person could have close personal friends numbered in the thousands.

Hubert Humphrey was that rare public official who could be a hero without needing a pedestal. Unlike some heroes I have known, he did not have a public face and a private face; rather, he was made of the same stuff all the way through. To serve in some sense as his surrogate, to act and help others learn to act as he would have acted in public and international affairs, is a one-of-a-kind opportunity. I eagerly accept it.

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"Public Affairs" is not one more discipline, to be defined by a particular method of analysis. It is not a new profession, either, in the tradition of medicine and business and law. It is the public action, the public responsibility component of every profession.

"Public Affairs" focusses on how the general management of any society uses expert knowledge and specialized methods to make something happen. It is concerned with the politics of value and the values of politics. It does not mistake growth for progress, but asks "Growth for what? 'Growth for whom?" And it keeps asking the question, "How do you get everybody in on the act and still get some action?"

In "Public Affairs," research and analysis must above all be integrative. "Public Affairs" education means learning to think integratively. And right here is the chief bottleneck, I think in our society of specialized achievement.

Both in universities and in the world of work, education and training are concentrated on producing first-rate specialists. We need them badly. But as we multiply the specialization of knowledge, we need even worse what we are not producing -- the leaders who can "get it all together."

The ladder to leadership in our society is always expert excellence. But the practice of leadership is a different line of work, requiring different insights, different intellectual tools, different values, and different personal relationships.

If the central concern of an institute of "public affairs" is the reflective practice of leadership, the institute needs to work across the university with every discipline and profession, and outside the university with diverse local, national and international communities that are trying to clarify the purposes and develop the techniques for getting things done in the public interest.

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Several years ago, perhaps with Hubert Humphrey as my subconscious model, I listed four attitudes as indispensable to the management of complexity:

- ° The notion that crises are normal, tensions are promising, and complexity is fun;
- ° A realization that paranoia and self-pity are reserved for people who don't want to be leaders;
- ° The conviction that there must be some more upbeat outcome than would result from the sum of available expert advice; and
- ° A sense of personal responsibility for the situation as a whole.

Hubert Humphrey was the very model of a situation-as-a-whole person. He felt a personal responsibility for growing more food, making useful goods, distributing wealth fairly, creating better jobs, combatting inflation, managing government and ensuring international peace. We need a million more like him, and American higher education is not doing nearly enough about it.

Minnesota has already done more than its share to sponsor innovation and provide quality leaders for America. By betting on the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Minnesota is pioneering again -- and I am looking forward to joining you on the frontier.